A Proposed Diagnostic Framework

by

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on

The Future Role of the National Conference on Social Welfare

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Introduction

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a diagnostic framework for use by the Study Commission both in examining the present structure and functioning of the National Conference on Social Welfare and in formulating recommendations concerning the future-oriented policy of the Conference. Since the term "diagnostic framework" is not completely self-explanatory, a few prefatory comments are perhaps in order.

The staff of the Conference has in recent months prepared a series of papers which describe from several different points of view the current status of the Conference and its Annual Forum: its organizational structure, its membership, its program, its financing, its objectives, etc. Similarly, the history of the Conference since its founding in 1874 has recently been very systematically and competently reviewed. * For this reason, very little attention is paid in this memorandum to the descriptive aspects of the Conference; basic knowledge of these on the part of the reader is assumed.

If this memorandum is not descriptive, neither is it truly theoretical. Although for many purposes it would be useful to have available a theoretical analysis of the Conference, which would seek to develop propositions which would apply to all organizations of its type, no such analysis is attempted here, for two reasons. First, there is practically no body of theory upon which such an analysis could be based. For a variety of reasons, sociologists who have studied large-scale organizations have not directed their attention to organizations which are as amorphous as the Conference. Rather, organizational theory in its present state of development is almost entirely concerned with what might be termed "closed" organizations: those with a well-defined membership which is sharply stratified and in frequent inter-action. Industrial organizations, government bureaucracies, trade unions, and voluntary health associations are all examples of organizations having these general characteristics. **

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* See Frank J. Bruno, Trends in Social Work, 1874-1956 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957).

** Illustrative examples of sociological analyses of organizations of this kind are the following:
Industrial organizations: F. J. Roethlisberger and William J. Dickson, Management and the Worker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943); Alvin W. Gouldner, Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy (Glenco, Ill.: Free Press, 1954).
Government bureaucracies: Walter R. Sharp, The French Civil Service (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931); Peter M. Blau, The Dynamics of Bureaucracy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).
Trade Unions: Seymour M. Lipset, Martin A. Trow and James S. Coleman, Union Democracy (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956;) Arnold M. Rose, Union Solidarity (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1952).
Voluntary health associations: David L. Sills, The Volunteers (Glenco, Ill.: Free Press, 1957).

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A second and more positive reason for not attempting a theoretical analysis in this memorandum is that it is intended to be used in part as a starting point for clarifying a large number of highly specific questions concerning the Conference. Although social theory often provides directives for very specific programs of action, considering the present state of knowledge in this field a diagnostic framework should prove more useful.

What, then, is a "diagnostic framework?" In simplest terms, it is an organized list of categories, or criteria, against which a specific organizational characteristic or proposed characteristic can be judged. It is not, at least in the present version, a fully-documented analysis. Nor is it a particularly well-informed one, since the writer has had no first-hand, and only cursory secondhand, knowledge of the empirical facts concerning the Conference. Rather, it is a somewhat irresponsible somewhat uninformed, and fundamentally outside view of the Conference which is presented in these pages. The ultimate utility of such a framework can only be determined empirically. One practical use is described below.

An Illustration

Since it is the people who belong to the Conference -- who they are, what they think of the Conference, how the Conference helps them, how they compare the Conference with other organizations having similar purposes -- who will ultimately determine its future, a major part of this inquiry will consist of questions addressed to individuals. But what questions should be asked?

A fundamental feature of most social research inquiries is that the questions posed by the consumers of the research (in this case the Study Commission and through it, the Conference itself) can seldom be used in untranslated form by the researchers. To illustrate: if the leaders of a Protestant denomination want to know the extent to which they can make official statements of policy about matters of public interest without antagonizing their parishioners, the researchers cannot ask this questions of parishioners directly. Instead, they would ask parishioners a series of questions -- about their political and social attitudes, their frequency of church attendance, their knowledge of the church's public pronouncements, etc. -- which would provide the raw data for the analysis. The task of the researchers would then be to examine the responses to one question with those of another, to develop various indices of "concern" or "identification", etc. Through an internal analysis of this type a series of findings would emerge which hopefully would make it possible to answer the initial question posed by the denomination.

How do the researchers composes these specific questions? The method varies somewhat of course from study to study, but one common method is to develop a "model" of the behavior involved in the phenomenon under investigation. To illustrate: recent studies of how people vote as

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they do in presidential elections have made use of a highly abstract "model" of the decision to vote, which includes such dimensions as family voting patterns, attitudes toward current issues, exposure to campaign propaganda, exposure to the voting intentions of friends and relatives, etc. Using this "model" as a guide, the researchers have a reasonable assurance that important areas will not be neglected in the questionnaire instrument they prepare.

The same logic applies in the present case. In order to know what kinds of questions to ask members of the Conference, potential members of the Conference, leaders of Associate Groups, etc., it is necessary to develop some kind of "model" of the structure and activities of the Conference. The present diagnostic framework constitutes an outline or illustration of such a "model"; it will take several months of preliminary investigation in order to construct the complete "model" from which the actual plan of inquiry will be developed.

Towards a Sociological Definition of the Conference

The story is told of three baseball umpires who were discussing the intricacies of their trade. The conversation turned to the problem of how to tell the difference between a ball and a strike.

"I calls 'em as they are," was the first umpire's contribution to the theory of umpiring. "I calls 'em as I see 'em," retorted the second. The third umpire spat between his teeth, gave his colleagues a disgusted look, and stated: "They ain't nuthin' until I calls 'em!"

Translated into the terms of the present discussion, the first umpire would clearly make a descriptive statement about the Conference; he would, for example, note simply that it is an organization which sponsors an annual forum attended by workers in the social welfare field. The second umpire, however, would make an interpretative or evaluative statement; he would note, for example, that the Conference is "one of the primary instruments for keeping social welfare problems abreast of the changing American scene. Its leadership has been in the area of ideas. It has posed the central issues of the day confronting social welfare programs and provided a national forum for their examination and debate."* The third umpire is more difficult to understand, since he is obviously a sociologist. How would he define the Conference?

Looking first at its membership he would say that the Conference is a professional organization, but one of the very special kind: it is neither the primary professional society in the field of social work -- the National Association of Social Workers performs that function -- nor is it composed entirely of professional social workers. Although in recent years nearly 90 per cent of the registrants at the Annual Forum have been employed in social work,

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* Quoted from the Introduction to the proposal requesting funds for the present study.

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these people are not necessarily professional social workers. Furthermore, lay persons have from time to time been elected to the important post of President. The Conference is therefore located somewhere on the continuum between a society of professional social workers and an association of workers in social agencies. In this respect it reflects the current status of the social welfare field.

Turning next to the structure of the Conference, the sociologist would note that it is technically a formal organization; in legal terms, it is "a voluntary association of individual and organization members who have joined the Conference to promote and share in discussion of the problems and methods identified with the field of social work and immediately related fields." * But he would note also that the social welfare movement is one of the major social movements of our time, and that the Conference can therefore be regarded as an example of a phnomenon known as "the institutionalization of social movements."

This phenomenon has been observed in a wide variety of empirical situations, and there is a growing body of literature reporting on the "life cycle" of social movements. In simplest terms, what happens in many, if not most, social movements is the following: the original leadership either generates or capitalizes upon a growing feeling of unrest among the population, and seeks ways of translating this unrest into social action. In order to do this the responsibility for carrying out specific tasks is delegated to others; i. e., an organization is created. The process of delegation, from this point of view, is the fundamental process underlying the formation of organizations.

"This organizational paradox," as it has been called, ** stems from the fact that organizations often prevent the translation of unrest into social action. This is true because in order to accomplish their goals, organizations must establish a set of procedures or means. In the course of following these procedures, the persons to whom authority and functions have been delegated often come to regard them as ends in themselves rather than as means toward the achievement of the organization's goals. The inevitable result of this process is that the actual activities of the organization ultimately become centered upon the proper functioning of organization procedures, rather than upon the achievement of the initial goals. This phenomenon has been observed in a number of social movements in the process of becoming institutionalized; perhaps the most dramatic example is Robert Michels' classic analysis of goal displacement in such institutionalized expressions of the socialist movement as political parties and labor unions. *** Viewed from this perspective, the Conference

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*Quoted from the Preamble to the Conference Constitution.

** Philip Selznick, "An Approach to a Theory of Bureaucracy," American Sociological Review, 8 (1943), p. 49.

*** Robert Michels, Political Parties (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1949). This book was first published in Germany in 1911.

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would appear to be located somewhere on the continuum between a formal organization and a social movement.

There is no need to review here the wide range of activities which have been described as social movements. Generically, a social movement may be defined as the activities of organized groups which seek to bring about some change in society. Herbert Blumer, for example, states that social movements may be defined as "collective enterprises to establish a new way of life"; Rudolph Heberle describes a social movement as "a collective ready for action by which some kind of change is to be achieved, some innovation to be made, or some previous condition to be restored"; and Wendell King says that social movements involved "a systematic effort to inaugurate changes in thought, behavior, and social relationships." * Since by these criteria the social welfare movement qualifies as a social movement, and since the Conference is also by definition a formal organization which promotes the discussion and clarification of the problems involved in achieving social welfare, its status as the institutionalized expression of a social movement seems beyond dispute.

The usefulness of these definitions for present purposes is that they make it possible to locate the Conference on the coordinates inherent in these continua, and thus provide a basis for comparing the Conference with other voluntary associations. Chart I presents one attempt to locate it and compare it in this way.

The accuracy of the position assigned to individuals in Chart I is irrelevant for present purposes; what is relevant is the position of the Conference on the diagonal between the two continua. For it suggests that a balanced view of the Conference requires that it be viewed both as a lay association and as a professional society; both as a formal organization and as a social movement.

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* See Herbert Blumer, "Collective Behavior," in Alfred M. Lee, (ed.), Principles of Sociology, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1955), p. 199; Rudolf Heberle, "Observations on the Study of Social Movements," American Sociological Review, 14 (1949), p. 349; and C. Wendell King, Social Movements in the United States, (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 27.

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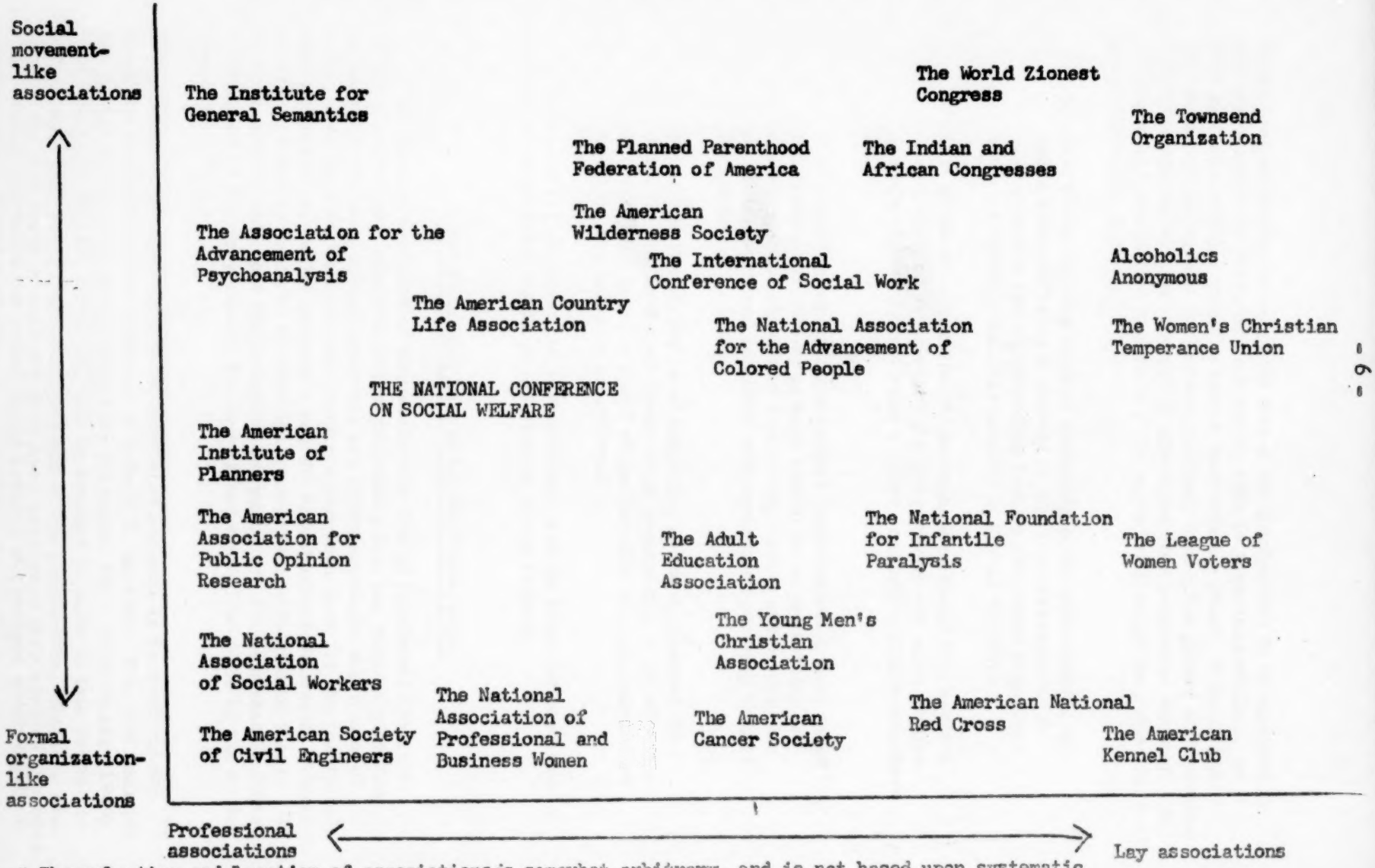
THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WELFARE COMPARED TO OTHER VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS*



* The selection and location of associations is somewhat arbitrary, and is not based upon systematic research. This chart is intended for expository purposes only.

More pragmatically, it suggests that if the Conference is to continue in the years ahead to perform its historic role in American society, or if it is self-consciously going to seek a new role for itself, it must either maintain something like its present position within the galaxy of American voluntary association or change its character in a purposive manner. In making decisions of this character, the leadership might be guided by such possibilities as these:

-- If it takes the direction of becoming a lay association, or more towards being a society of semi-professionals, it may compete for membership loyalty with such organisations as the National Association of Social Workers

-- If it takes the direction of becoming a professional society it will exclude or alienate the lay persons and semi-professionals who now form such a large proportion of the membership

-- If it takes the direction of formal organization it may place too much emphasis upon such concerns as preserving its organizational character and strengthening the profession of social work and too little emphasis upon striving toward its goals

-- If it takes the direction of acquiring social movement-like characteristics it may become too amorphous to be effective and will thus deprive itself of the benefits of organization for which it was initially established.

This general statement of possibilities, and its implications, are spelled out in greater detail in the section which follows.

The Functions Served by the Conference

The basic orientation of this section is that of functional analysis. In simplest terms, this orientation postulates that the various patterns of behavior within a social structure are interdependent; more specifically, they survive because they perform functions both for the individuals who comprise the social structure and the social structure itself. Although no attempt will be made to summarize contemporary functional theory, it is important to note that the functions examined are not necessarily those recognized by the participants but are rather those identified by the social observer. *

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* The writer's orientation toward functional analysis is derived chiefly from the publications and lectures of Robert K. Merton. See, for example, his Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1949). It is important to add, however, that no attempt is made in this section to undertake a full-scale functional analysis of the Conference. Rather, concepts from this mode of analysis have been used when they seemed appropriate, leaving untouched the rather large armory of concepts which together constitutes functional analysis.

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What are the functions served by the Conference and its Annual Forum? In the paradigm which follows, the hypothesized functions served are listed according to whether the individual member or the professional of social work "benefits" from the function, and according to whether it is the formal organization-like characteristics or the social movement-like characteristics of the Conference (and the Annual Forum) which make each function possible.

Functions served for the individual member

A. When viewed as the annual meeting of a professional society

1. Increases status in his agency

When a member of a social agency attends the Annual Forum he does so not only as an individual, but as a representative (official or unofficial) of his own agency. He thus serves as an agent who relates the agency to the larger world of social welfare, a role which in itself serves to enhance his status among his colleagues in the agency and perhaps also among the agency's constitutents and the public which it serves.

2. Contributes to professional development

Many of the program sessions at the Annual Forum are didactic in nature and serve to remind those attending of the basic principles of social work as well as to acquaint them with new techniques of case work, group work, and community organization.

3. Provides news of the profession

Since most social agencies are relatively small, most members work in comparative isolation from their profession. Through attending sessions at the Annual Forum, and particularly through participating in conversations, the individual probably learns in the space of a few days more news about people in the profession, and about recent developments within the profession, that he does during the entire course of the year.

4. Assists in locating new jobs

Although many new jobs are located through such formal channels as employment agencies and advertisements in professional journals, informal channels are undoubtedly of equal importance. Through attendance at the Annual Forum the individual is able to avail himself of other channels of communication and through these to learn of the existence of new job opportunities in his own field of specialization and interest.

B. When viewed as a gathering of participants in a social movement

5. Counter-balances the means-centered emphasis of his agency

The previously-mentioned tendency of organizations to displace their goals by an over-emphasis upon means is of course often perceived to their dismay by the individual members of social agencies. In fact, this tendency is a recurrent source of frustration, since there probably are as many goal-oriented as organization-oriented persons in the social welfare field. The Conference, however, places a great deal of emphasis upon the goals of the social welfare movement, and upon the humanitarian philosophy which guides the profession. Exposure to this kind of atmosphere at the Annual Forum enables the individual to conceptualize his organization-oriented tasks in terms of the broader goals which they are intended to achieve.

6. Provides an opportunity to identify with national leaders

Because of its size and status the Conference is able to enlist as speakers at the Annual Forum not only leaders from within the social welfare field but also prestigeful persons prominent in the worlds of politics, education, and science. Although most registrants undoubtedly do not have an opportunity to interact with these speakers, their very presence at the Annual Forum, and the fact that they address themselves to problems of common interest, enables members to feel that they are more than mere job-holders in a social agency. It reminds them, in effect, that they are also participants in one of the most significant social movements of our era.

7. Makes it possible to meet like-minded peers

The social welfare worker in a small city, or in a small agency -- particularly if he is strongly ideologically-oriented -- does not often have a chance to meet and converse with people who are

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employed in the social welfare field and emotionally committed to its goals. The Conference and its Annual Forum provide such an opportunity. The Annual Forum is, as one member put it, "a gathering of the tribe". In bars and in hotel rooms these tribal gatherings are both fun and serve to maintain among the membership a feeling of participation in a movement which goes beyond carrying out the tasks assigned to a particular agency.

8. Clarifies and broadens personal goals

The goals of social welfare are constantly restated and reconceptualized during the Annual Forum; since this is performed by individuals, the various personal goals of the individual speakers are also described. The registrant who hears a succession of such speakers, and who participates in the countless informal discussions which are also an important feature of the Annual Forum, has many opportunities to clarify his own goals, and thus to rededicate himself to the tasks of his agency.

Functions served for the profession of social work

A. When viewed as the annual meeting of a professional, formal organization

9. Enhances the status of social work as a profession

Although the professionalization of workers in the field of social welfare is of course not the only possible mode of making provisions for caring for people in need, it is nevertheless the mode which our society has adopted. Consequently, the tasks assigned to social workers will be performed more efficiently to the extent to which the activity acquires and maintains professional status. The Conference and its Annual Forum serve to enhance each of the attributes which our society recognizes as those of a profession: *

-- Its fund of knowledge is organized into a systematic body of theory

-- Its clients recognize and benefit from the authority which members possess

-- Its authority is recognized by the public which confers upon the profession a series of powers and privileges

*This list of attributes is adapted from the extremely useful article by Ernest Greenwood, "Attributes of a Profession," Social Work (July 1957), pp. 45-55.

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-- It possesses a continually modified and enforced regulative code of ethics

-- It possess a commonly-recognized professional culture

This function is of particular importance in the case of the Conference, since it is an organization containing both professionals and semi-professionals. Since semi-professionals will be required in social work for many decades, and since their increased self-awareness as professionals will enhance the profession itself, those activities of the Conference which serve to socialize semi-professionals into the professional culture of social work are of much value for the profession. By the same token, those activities which make it possible for semi-professionals to communicate with professionals, and vice versa, make it possible for such socialization to take place.

10. Improves professional morale

In order for people to be motivated to play the roles required of them as professionals, they must perceive themselves as professionals, and be aware of a similar perception on the part of individual members of the public and society at large. The Conference, through its profesionally-related activities at the Annual Forum, provides individual registrants with ample stimuli to make these perceptions possible, and thus improves professional morale.

11. Allocates trained individuals to appropriate assignments

Operationally defined, social work may be said to have become fully professionalized when the occupants of all the professional positions in the social welfare field are trained professionals. The opportunities for finding employment and employers which the Annual Forum provides thus serves the interests not only of the individuals and agencies concerned, but also those of the profession at large, since it contributes toward the emergence of professional status.

B. When viewed as a gathering of participants in a social movement

12. Develops a common set of values

One characteristic of a profession which sets it apart from occupations generally is that its members share a common set of values, in contradistinction to skills. Ernest Greenwood,

for example, notes that "the profession thus becomes a whole social environment, nuturing characteristic social and political attitudes, patterns of consumption and recreation, and decorum and Woltanschauung." * Although both professional education and professional employment serve to acculturate individuals into this social environment, the co-mingling of large numbers of people at such a meeting as the Annual Forum undoubtedly plays an important part in this process. And it is precisely those aspects of the Conference which have a social movement-like character (the participation of laymen, the emphasis upon broad goals, etc.) which contribute most toward imparting to social workers a common set of values.

13. Increases lay support

Unlike other professions, whose contact with the lay public is chiefly in the form of clients (doctors, lawyers), employers (engineers), audiences (musicians), or parishioners (ministers), social work requires assistance from laymen in the form of co-workers, board members, fund-raisers, and contributors. In fact, a paradox which lies at the heart of many of the problems faced by the Conference is that at a time when the profession of social work is becoming increasingly professionalized there is a revival of interest in the importance of the volunteer worker in the field of social welfare. Since one of the consequences of the increasing professionalization of social work is a devalued status accorded the volunteer worker, mechanisms are required for the purpose of maintaining the interest, and preserving the services of volunteer workers. The Conference, particularly in its affect-oriented characteristics, would seem to provide one such mechanism.

14. Mitigates over-specialization

Because of the diversity of its problem areas, the profession of social work requires that many of its members be specialists; this tendency is accentuated further by the specialisation of function which characterizes many social agencies. If social work is to become truly professionalized, however, it must develop a systematic body of theory which is applicable to a wide variety of specific cases. Accordingly, it must develop generalists as well as specialists. Although schools of social work are probably the most important institutional mechanisms for the development of such persons, the Conference, through its emphasis upon the goals and ideals of the profession, plays an important role in ensuring that specialization does not degenerate into technicism.

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* Greenwood, op. cit., p. 53n.

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The list of functions served by the Conference and the Annual Forum provided in this section (and summarized in Chart II) will eventually be expanded in several ways, according to the purposes which the analysis is designed to serve. Internally, it will be expanded to encompass additional functions; the ones listed are based upon an inadequate knowledge of the Conference and its activities, and are chiefly illustrative in nature. Although an effort has been made to cite functions which are logically compatible with the nature of the Conference, the status of many of these functions as hypotheses requiring empirical demonstration should be remembered.

Externally, the list will also be expanded. First, it is possible to include two additional units for which the Conference serves functions: the associated groups and American society at large. The associated groups have not been con idered because their relationship to the Conference is too complex to be treated in a brief memorandum; American society has not been considered in order to confine the present discussion to an internal inquiry into the role of the Conference.

Second, the dichotomy composed of "professional, formal organization" on the one hand and on the other "social movement" will be expanded. These terms are used to indicate polar types of collectivities, and as such they necessarily over-simplify the complex structure of the Conference. It will undoubtedly be worthwhile to include the distinction between the Conference as an organization composed of individual members and one to which autonomous organizations belong. When this is done, the functions served by the Conference can be compared on the one hand to those served by the National Association of Social Workers (individual members only), and on the other hand to those served by the National Social Welfare Assembly (primarily organizational representatives).

Third, a complete analysis will require a listing not only of the functions served by the Conference but also of the dysfunctions. The distinction between these two terms has been defined by Merton as follows:

> Functions are those observed consequences which make for the adaptation or adjustment of a given system; and dysfunctions, those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system. There is also the empirical possibility of non-functional consequences, which are imply irrelevant to the system under consideration. *

The relevance of this distinction for present purposes stems of course from the fact that not all features of the Conference are functional for all concerned. Consider for example the open membership policy of the Conference, which makes it possible for all persons interested in the field of

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* Mertin, op. cit. pp. 50-51.

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CHART II

SOME FUNCTIONS SERVED BY THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WELFARE

	Functions for the individual	Functions for the profession
When viewed as the annual meeting of a professional, formal organization	1. Increases status in his agency	9. Enhances the status of social work as a profession
	2. Contributes to professional development	10. Improves professional morale
	3. Provides news of the profession	11. Allocates trained individuals to appropriate assignments
	4. Assist in locating new jobs	
When viewed as a gathering of participants in a social movement	5. Counter-balances the means-centered emphasis of his agency	12. Develops a common set of values
	6. Provides an opportunity to identify with national leaders	13. Increases lay support
	7. Makes it possible to meet like-minded peers	14. Mitigates over-specialization
	8. Clarifies and broadens personal goals	

social welfare, and sympathetic to its aims, to belong. This feature is presumably functional and for the lay and semi-professional members of the Conference, since it provides them with an opportunity to participate on an equal basis with professional social workers. But it may be dysfunctional for the profession of social work itself, since it diminishes the status of professionally-trained social workers. It is situations such as these, according to Merton, which give rise to "the difficult and important problem of evolving canons for assessing the net balance of the aggregate of consequences."* Since the Conference is by its very nature ambiguous in many respects (as indicated, for example, by its position midway between the coordinates shown in Chart I) the problem of assessing a net balance of the aggregate of consequences is one which the Study Commission, either explicitly or implicitly, will be required to face.

Although the functions described in this section are admittedly not exhaustive, enough has perhaps been said to suggest the purposes which can be served by an analysis of this kind. In the next section of this memorandum a possible method of relating these functions to a concrete analysis of the Conference is described.

The Utilization of a Diagnostic Framework

One of the major tasks of the Study Commission is to formulate recommendations concerning what features of the Conference should be added, modified, or eliminated to ensure maximum effectiveness. Many of these recommendations will undoubtedly emerge from the working papers prepared by the staff, from the advice provided by consultants, and from the deliberations of the Study Commission itself. The diagnostic framework proposed in this memorandum is intended to supplement, not displace, these traditional methods of arriving at recommendations.

The distinguishing characteristic of a diagnostic framework, however, is that it provides a systematic basis for ensuring that significant features are not overlooked. Instead of eliminating the need for discussion and consultation, it merely suggests a starting point. The implications of this general directive for the task facing the Study Commission are best indicated by specific illustration.

Consider the functions described in the previous section and summarized in Chart II. These functions are of course not carried out automatically, but rather result from the provision in the structure and activities of the Conference and its Annual Forum of specific features, here termed mechanisms. The identification of these mechanisms thus becomes an important part of a systematic analysis of the Conference itself.

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* Merton, op. cit. p. 51.

An important corollary to the assertion that functions are served through mechanisms is that any one of a number of different mechanisms may serve the same function. Accordingly, assertions about the mechanisms required for the performance of a given function are at best suggestive of the type of mechanism which is required. The recommendation that a given mechanism should be retained or adopted must thus be based not only upon the function which it is alleged to perform but also upon other considerations than those deriving from a purely logical analysis of an organization: administrative feasibility, acceptance on the part of the membership, budgetary limitations, etc.

With this as introduction, the functions listed in Chart II are in the pages which follow matched up with suggested mechanisms which (might) make them possible.

Function	Possible mechanisms
1. Increases status in his agency	-- Registrants at the Annual Forum provided with specific training materials which they can use upon their return to their agency
	-- Maximum publicity given to the Annual Forum; local publicity given to individual delegates
	-- The program of the Annual Forum structured in such a way that a maximum number of registrants appear as speakers, panelists, or discussants
	-- Establishment of the special status of Delegate to the Annual Forum
2. Contributes to professional development	-- Emphasis placed during the Annual Forum upon training and technique
	-- Sponsorship by schools of social work of some of the sessions at the Annual Forum
3. Provides news of the profession	-- Opportunities for informal conversation and sociability during the Annual Forum
	-- Inclusion of news and notes section in the Conference Bulletin

4.	Assists in locating new jobs	-- Employment bureau facilities provided at the Annual Forum
5.	Counter-balances the means-centered emphasis of his agency	-- Emphasis placed during the Annual Forum upon the goals of social welfare
		-- Inclusion in the program of the Annual Forum of workshops or diagnostic clinics concerned with the organizational problems of social agencies
6.	Provides an opportunity to identify with national leaders	-- Prestigeful persons invited to address the Annual Forum
		-- Arrangements for discussion group sessions at the Annual Forum with national leaders present
7.	Makes it possible to meet like-minded peers	-- Opportunities for informal conversations at the Annual Forum
		-- Publication of a mimeographed "Who's Who" during the Annual Forum
8.	Clarifies and broadens personal goals	-- Inclusion during the Annual Forum and in the Bulletin of biographical and autobiographical accounts of leaders in the field of social welfare
		-- Establishment at the Annual Forum of small discussion group sessions at which personal problems are discussed
9.	Enhances the status of social work as a profession	-- Meeting of the National Association of Social Workers held jointly with the Annual Forum
		-- Participation of Associated Groups in the Annual Forum

10. Improves professional morale	-- Emphasis during the Annual Forum upon the professional problems of social workers
	-- Participation by members in standing committees of the Conference
	-- Categories of membership based upon professional status
11. Allocates trained individuals to appropriate assignments	-- Employment bureau facilities provided at the Annual Forum
12. Develops a common set of values	-- Sessions at the Annual Forum devoted to the problems which are unique to the profession of social work
13. Increases lay support	-- Participation of lay persons as members and speakers at the Annual Forum
	-- Sessions at the Annual Forum devoted to reports on the role played by volunteers in social agencies
	-- Emphasis placed during the Annual Forum upon the partnership of professionals and volunteers which makes contemporary social welfare possible
14. Mitigates over-specialization	-- Minimization of simultaneous sessions at the Annual Forum, so that members will be encouraged to attend sessions other than those devoted to their own field of specialization
	-- Minimization of content-oriented sessions at the Annual Forum

The point cannot be made too strongly that the mechanisms listed above are submitted only as illustrations of the types of mechanisms which an analysis of this type would reveal. It is certainly true that many of them

are administratively unfeasible and that many others are perhaps self-evident. It is suggested, however, that the near-irrelevancy of many of these mechanisms stems from the fact that the necessary preliminary task of defining the functions served by the Conference and the Annual Forum has only been initiated. With a more fully-developed inventory of functions at hand, it will undoubtedly be possible to identify many more mechanisms.

Developing such an inventory is thus one of the first tasks which this inquiry might accomplish. Through holding discussion among members, through securing expert testimony from members, consultants, and participants in other organizations, and through systematic research among members and non-members, it should be possible not only to map out in some detail the functions served by the Conference, but also -- and of even greater importance -- to suggest other functions which it might serve in the future. Such as listing, matched by specific mechanisms which make each function possible, should then provide one basis for use in formulating recommendations concerning changes which should be made in the structure and activities of the Conference if it is to perform a useful role in the field of social welfare.